

Global Messengers

Sharing Japan's Strengths



People selected by the Global Messengers of "Japan" Project gather at an appreciation letter presentation ceremony at the Foreign Press Center, Tokyo, September 18, 2012.

In September 2012, letters of appreciation were received by a select group of Japanese for their contribution to spreading the message of the charms of Japan.

Under the Global Messengers of “Japan” project of the National Policy Unit of the Cabinet Secretariat, appreciation letters were sent in September to sixty-three Japanese who have contributed to enhancing Japan’s international standing through their activities in various corners of the world. At a presentation ceremony held on September 18, then Minister for National Policy Motohisa Furukawa handed these appreciation letters directly to the recipients in attendance on the day, praising them for their “passion without borders.”

While domestically there are numerous well-known Japanese who have achieved great success overseas, there are many more whose activities in a wide range of fields around the world are not adequately recognized in Japan. The selection committee therefore included members of the foreign press—from Europe, North America, Asia, Oceania, South America and the Middle East—so as to reflect the viewpoints of non-Japanese. The committee then debated the merits of the 100-plus candidates recommended by the members from the viewpoint of how they are extending Japan's positive aspects in their respective fields.

While those ultimately selected are active across a wide range of fields from culture and art to academia, sports and international cooperation, several common points emerge from their activities.

The first of these is an emphasis on cooperation. Their activities overseas do not force the values of Japan or the Japanese on the local people, but develop out of thoughts and actions taken together with them. Among these people operating in completely different locations and at varying ages, many have plunged themselves into the life of an ordinary citizen to engage in grassroots activities. This doesn't mean they have merely assimilated to a particular locale; it means they have acted to make lives better for the local people while at the same time utilizing the fact that they are Japanese. Further, as we will introduce in this month's issue, these activities also imply the sense of respect given to the host country, in one case manifest in efforts to find new value in an aspect of traditional culture undervalued by locals.

The next noteworthy quality the selectees share is a mission-oriented passion. Without thought for their own prestige or benefit, they put the local people first and act with devotion. To give one example from the field of medicine, out of the sheer desire to help people suffering from illness, one doctor abandons his stable life in Japan to spend half a month providing free medical services overseas.

In this month's issue, we will highlight the Japanese people engaged in dedicated activities in terms of local life and culture based on actual cases from the project. 



Japan. Passion without borders.